



Why Won't My Partner Have Sex With Me?

"Why Won't my Partner Have Sex With Me?"

By Dr. Margaret Paul

I have worked with individuals and couples for the past 43 years, and I have heard this question countless times: "Why doesn't my partner want to have sex with me?"

Over and over, I discover that there is often ONE major reason he or she doesn't want to have sex.

Take Lawrence as an example. Lawrence learned as an adolescent to use sex addictively. He would find his father's porn magazines that his father thought were hidden away and use them to satisfy himself. As he grew older, he learned to use the Internet for the same purpose - turning to his sexual addiction to fill the inner emptiness that came from his self-abandonment.

Lawrence was abandoning himself in numerous ways:

- He ignored his feelings
- He judged himself unmercifully
- He made his wife and others responsible for his feelings
- He turned to various addictions to avoid his pain and emptiness

Because Lawrence had never learned to take responsibility for his own feelings and define his own worth, he had learned to use not only sex, but wine and anger as well to fill his emptiness and take away his aloneness.

When he got married, he never saw his wife, Annie, as an equal. Because he had developed the belief that women were objects to be used by men, Annie was just someone to be used to satisfy his neediness.

Before his work with me, both Annie and Lawrence believed there was something wrong with Annie sexually. Annie did not understand why she didn't want to make love with Lawrence. She didn't know why her body just seemed to shut down sexually when he came on to her. She loved Lawrence, but she could not stand to have sex with him. Sometimes she forced herself rather than endure his anger at her, but lately she was no longer forcing herself. It felt too awful.

It was obvious to me in my first phone session with Lawrence that the problem was that Lawrence was coming to Annie as a needy little boy rather than as a loving man. Most women do not find needy little boys at all attractive or erotic.

Lawrence was convinced that either he wasn't attractive enough, or that there was something wrong with Annie. Neither is true.

As I worked with Lawrence with Inner Bonding, he gradually learned to take responsibility for his own feelings. He gradually learned how to be loving to himself, how to connect with his spiritual source of love, and how to fill himself with love so that he had love to share with Annie. Gradually, he stopped pulling on Annie for sex and stopped getting angry when she didn't want to have sex with him.

Then, in one of our phone sessions, Lawrence announced, "Annie made love to me the other night, all on her own!"

I had been assuring Lawrence that when he stopped seeing Annie as an object to be used to validate him and fill him up - when he stopped being needy and instead shared his love with her, she would re-discover her sexuality. And, of course, she did!

As long as Lawrence was abandoning himself and making Annie responsible for his sense of worth, he was focused on having control over getting Annie to have sex with him. There was no way that Annie would be turned to him when he was trying to control her and use her. But when Lawrence took on the responsibility of defining his own worth and giving himself the love he was trying so hard to get from Annie, he was able to let go of the control and be present with Annie with love.

Over and over I have seen relationships move back into passion when a needy partner learns how to be loving to themselves and come from love rather than neediness.

Men, Women and Sex

By Dr. Margaret Paul

During my many years of counseling couples, I have frequently worked with the sexual problems that often occur in committed relationships. The most common complaint from men regarding sex is frequency, and the most common complaint from woman is lack of emotional intimacy.

There is a very good reason why these are the most common complaints - men and women are very different when it comes to sex!

The biological sexual drive, or lack of it, relates to how much testosterone is present. Men biologically have much more testosterone than women. Men's biology equips them to be ready for sex most of the time, which is nature's way of ensuring the survival of the species. Women, on the other hand, often do not experience a biological sexual drive unless they are in the middle of their menstrual cycle. This fact can create a big problem in relationships.

I've often heard men complain that:

"It's not fair. My wife is in control of our sex life. If she wants it, then we have it. If she doesn't, then I have no say about it. Why does it always have to be her way?"

"My wife complains that she needs to feel intimate before we make love, but I get to intimacy through making love."

"I don't reach out for sex much anymore because I'm tired of being rejected, but my wife says she wants to be pursued in a romantic way. This feels like a no-win to me."

"I think if my wife really cared about me and my needs, she would have sex with me even when she wasn't turned on."

I've often heard women complain that:

"He always seems to be ready for sex, but I don't feel turned on unless we are feeling close. I can't just watch TV all evening and then feel like making love."

"I often feel pulled on for sex, as if having sex is more important than caring about me. When I do what he wants, I feel used, and when I don't, I run into his anger, resentment, blame or withdrawal. It feels like a no-win."

"My husband often comes to me like a needy little boy, wanting me to pacify him or validate him with sex. Ugh! There is nothing erotic about an insecure, needy little boy!"

"There must be something wrong with me. I just don't ever feel turned on anymore."

The very real issue here, at least for most men under 40, is that they are biologically motivated and women are mostly emotionally motivated. Heterosexual women get turned on when their man is warm, open, caring, and personally powerful. Most women are not turned on by a man who is closed, distant, angry, blaming or needy.

The problems of frequency can get resolved as men and women learn to understand and accept each other's differences. Men need to understand and accept that women are not as biologically motivated as men are. Many women rarely even think about sex, while most men will tell you that they think about sex frequently throughout the day. When men understand that women are turned on by love, romance, emotional intimacy, warmth, caring, and personal power, then men may be motivated to learn to be the loving, powerful and romantic partner that they are capable of being.

When women can accept that men's biology is very present for them, they can stop putting men down for it and start supporting their men in creating more emotional intimacy, romance, and personal power. When women criticize men instead of understanding and accepting them, they help to create some of the insecurity that is such a turn off to many women. When a woman can appreciate rather than demean her man for his sexuality, she can find ways of meeting his needs without feeling used.

Understanding and accepting each other's differences and needs can lead both men and women toward more satisfying sex lives.

Why Marital Sex Often Dies

By Dr. Margaret Paul

Research indicates that over 55% of married women are not interested in having sex with their husbands. In my 43 years of counseling couples, I've worked with many men who also are not interested in sex with their wives. The problem is generally not a lack of sexual desire - it's that they are not interested in sex with their partner.

There is a very good reason for this.

Sexuality in long-term relationships is the result of loving energy flowing between two people. If something is blocking this loving energy, the sexual energy between them often gets blocked as well.

There may be many reasons for loving and sexual energy being blocked, but the most common is what I call the "pull-resist relationship system."

Here's an example of how this system works:

Bill "pulls" on his wife, Jan, for time, approval, attention, appreciation, as well as for sex. Bill may pull with niceness, caretaking (giving in order to get something back), gifts, withdrawal, anger, or blame. These behaviors are a "pull" because Bill is coming from an empty place within, a vacuum-like black hole that wants to get filled through approval, validation and sex. In fact, sex is the main way, aside from work, that Bill's worth as a man gets validated and his inner emptiness gets filled up. It's the main way he feels loved.

Jan does not feel loved by the niceness and gifts, or and certainly not by Bill's withdrawal, anger and blame. Instead, she feels objectified. She feels that Bill is being nice or angry to manipulate her into having sex - not because he genuinely wants to give to her and express his love for her, but because he wants to get love from her. He comes to her like a needy little boy, wanting to get validated, filled, or released. She ends up feeling used and drained when they have sex rather than loved. Because she doesn't want to be used and controlled by Bill, and because she is not attracted to him when he is being needy, her whole body goes into resistance and she no longer feel sexually attracted to him. Of course it could be the other way around, with the woman pulling and the man resisting being used and controlled by her.

In this pull-resist system between Bill and Jan, a number of changes need to occur for the passion to come back into their relationship. Bill needs to stop trying to control Jan. He needs learn how to take responsibility for his own feelings and wellbeing - for validating himself and filling himself with love, rather than always trying to have control over getting something from Jan. He needs to be practicing Inner Bonding. Jan needs to learn to speak her truth rather than either complying (having sex even when she doesn't want to) or resisting. She needs to tell Bill that she is not turned on to him when he is pulling on her for sex, or for anything else such as time, attention, appreciation or approval. Until she is ready to speak her truth without blame or judgment about his emptiness and neediness, Bill cannot understand what the problem is. He will think it is just because she is frigid or has some other sexual problem, and will not understand his responsibility in their marital system. Jan also needs to practice Inner Bonding in order to become strong enough to speak her truth.

Most women are turned on to a man when he is in his power, feeling good about himself. Neediness is not a turn-on. Men, too, are often not turned on to a needy woman, a woman who needs him to make love to her for her to feel safe, worthy and lovable. In our society, it's more common for men to attempt to get their validation through sex than it is for women, which is why more men than women pull for sex. In either case, both partners need to do their Inner Bonding work so they can become strong enough to be loving with themselves and each other.